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22. The food according to claim 21 wherein the food is selected from the group consisting of milk, yogurt, curd, cheese, fermented milks, milk based fermented products, ice-creams, fermented cereal based products, milk based powders, infant formulae, tablets, liquid bacterial suspensions, dried oral supplement, liquid oral supplement, dry tube feeding and liquid tube feeding.

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is submitted in the above-identified patent application. Pursuant to the Preliminary Amendment Claims 3-12 have been amended and newly submitted Claims 20-22 have been added. This Preliminary Amendment does not add new matter. Further, Applicants note that the Preliminary Amendment is not being made to narrow the claims and/or for purposes of patentability but, merely to comport the claims to U.S. practice and/or to add additional claims. Applicants therefore do not intend to disclaim any subject matter in view of the amendments.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Versions with Markings to Show Changes Made.**"

Respectfully submitted,

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BY


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**In the Claims:**

Claims 3-4 and 7-13 have been amended as follows:

3. (Once Amended) The Lactobacillus strain according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, which is capable [to grow] of growing in the presence of up to 0.4 % bile salts.

4. (Once Amended) The Lactobacillus strain according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, which is selected from the group consisting of Lactobacillus rhamnosus [or] and Lactobacillus paracasei.

7. (Once Amended) A method for preparing [Use of a Lactobacillus strain according to any of the preceding claims for the preparation of] an ingestible support material comprising using a lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea.

8. (Once Amended) The method [use] according to claim 7, wherein the Lactobacillus strain is contained in the ingestible support material in an amount from about 10^5 cfu / g to about 10^{12} cfu / g support material.

9. (Once Amended) A method for preparing an ingestible support comprising the steps of using [Use of] a supernatant of a culture of a lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus [strain according to any of the claims 1 to 6 for the preparation of an ingestible support] having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea.

10. (Once Amended) The method of [use according to any of the claims 7 or] claim 9, wherein the ingestible support [material] is a food composition selected from the group consisting of milk, yogurt, curd, cheese, fermented milks, milk based fermented products, ice-creams, fermented cereal based products, milk based powders, and infant formulae.

11. (Once Amended) A method [The use according to any of the claims 7 to 10, wherein the support material is used] for the treatment [and/or prophylaxis] of a disorder [disorders] associated with diarrhoea comprising the step of administering a lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea.

12. (Once Amended) A [Food or] pharmaceutical composition containing at least one lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea [Lactobacillus strain according to any of the claims 1 to 6] or a supernatant of a culture thereof.

13. (Once Amended) The [composition] method according to claim [12,] 11 wherein the lactic acid bacterium strain is in a composition which is selected from the group consisting of milk, yogurt, curd, cheese, fermented milks, milk based fermented products, ice-creams, fermented cereal based products, milk based powders, infant formulae, tablets, liquid

bacterial suspensions, dried oral supplement, [wet] liquid oral supplement, dry tube feeding [or wet] and liquid tubefeeding.

Claims 14-22 have been added.

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